

The Old Creamery Theatre for Young Audiences proudly presents

# The Right Stuff

## A Teacher's Study Guide

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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **OUR MISSION**

The Old Creamery Theatre Company is proud to be the oldest professional theatre company in the state of Iowa. A not-for-profit organization founded in 1971, The Old Creamery is committed to bringing high-quality, live professional theatre to the people of Iowa and the Midwest. The mission of The Old Creamery Theatre for Young Audiences program is to provide children of varying ages with opportunities to experience, explore, and enjoy live theatre with the goal of instilling and nurturing a life-long appreciation of the performing arts. The company has always offered touring productions for children, but has recently added children's theatre productions to the main stage season along with a number of day-camps and week-long camps called Camp Creamery.

### **ANNUAL WRITING COMPETITION**

The Right Stuff was created using stories submitted to The Old Creamery Theatre through the annual writing competition. Stories are adapted by The Old Creamery's professional artists, but remain faithful to the idea, purpose, and intent of the young person who wrote the story. The annual writing competition first began in the early 90's and is open to all students in grades one through six. For instructions on how to submit a story for the 2011 competition, please visit The Old Creamery's website this fall for the contest rules and guidelines. Guidelines change each year, so please be sure to read the instructions carefully before submitting material. ([www.oldcreamery.com](http://www.oldcreamery.com))

### **THE CREATORS**

The Right Stuff is an original production created by the theatre professionals at The Old Creamery Theatre Company. After reading the nearly 400 stories that were submitted for the 2010 writing contest, they narrowed it down to a select few and began writing songs and dialogue, building sets and props, and designing the costumes and putting together the sound track. The Right Stuff premiered on February 15, 2010.

Director: Sean McCall  
Musical Director: Travis Smith  
Sound Designer: Ryan Milligan  
Set Designer: Tom Milligan  
Costume Designer: Marquetta Senters  
Props: Sean McCall, Jackie McCall, and Deborah Kennedy  
Cast: Deborah Kennedy  
Nicholas Hodge  
Jackie McCall  
Sean McCall  
Steve Weiss

## PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION

Take time before the show to talk to students about the art form of theatre and prepare them for what will happen at the production. Make sure to emphasize what makes theatre different from other kinds of entertainment that they have experienced in the past. Help them realize what a special relationship the audience and the actors have with each other during a live performance.

### HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A PLAY?

Ask students if they have ever seen a play or live theatrical performance before. Discuss what they saw, what they experienced, and how that might compare to attending The Right Stuff at their school.

### WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEATRE AND TELEVISION OR MOVIES?

- The audience is an important part of a live performance because the actors can see, hear, and interact with the people watching the play. Audience members can show their appreciation by giving the actors their full attention and by laughing and applauding at appropriate times, like at the end of a story or song.
- Movies and television shows are filmed. If an actor makes a mistake, the scene can be filmed again and corrected. Since theatre is live, unexpected things sometimes happen. This is part of the fun and excitement of live entertainment.
- Plays are performed by live actors. Although actors do their best to perform their part the same way each time they present a play, they can never make it exactly the same every time. Therefore each performance of a play is unique.

### WHAT IS PROPER THEATRE ETIQUETTE?

Explain what is expected of the students as audience members and discuss proper theatre etiquette as some of them may never have seen a live performance before.

- Make sure to remain seated and listen carefully during the performance. This will allow you and the people around you to enjoy the show without interruption. You will have plenty of time to talk to your friends after the show.
- Even though you may feel like saying something to the performers, keep your thoughts to yourself. You might disrupt the actors' concentration or disturb other people in the audience if you start talking out loud. Some plays are written for the audience to be a part of the show, but not all. You should participate if, and only if, you are invited to do so by the actors.
- Laughing and clapping are encouraged! If you think something is funny, laugh. If you like a story, clap at the end. This is how you let the actors know that you are having fun.

## STORY SYNOPSES

### “The Adventures of Mrs. Clean”

Written by Kelsey T. in 5<sup>th</sup> grade

The town of Summerfield has been struck by a “grime” wave and the local authorities need help! Officer Bob calls in the professionals, Mrs. Clean and Miss Tidy, and the culprit behind the mess is discovered. Once The Litterer is captured the ladies teach him that it’s everyone’s responsibility to keep the city clean and it can even be fun.

### “Yellow Dot. Red Dot.”

Written by Madeline W. in 6<sup>th</sup> grade

In the land of the dots yellow dots and red dots are not allowed to play together, that is until a red dot named Dottie decides to make some changes. With the help of a yellow dot named Speckle, red and yellow come together to play in the dark where colors cannot be seen. After a wonderful night of playing, the dots decide they should play together all the time, not just in the dark, but in the light as well.

### “Tony”

Written by Autumn D., Kalle S. and Katie P. in 6<sup>th</sup> grade

A bully named Tony has no friends until a new girl gives him some words of advice, “you’ll always be lonely until you are nice.” Finally realizing the error of his ways, Tony does learn to be nice and finds that it suits him.

### “Cooking with Jealousy”

Written by Lauren C. in 4<sup>th</sup> grade

Salty, Peppy, Rika, and Garlic all live in Zesty’s kitchen. Everyone is excited to enter the cooking contest, however, Peppy knows that Garlic is a great cook and will be tough to beat. He decides to sabotage her entry by adding stinky sock sweat to her Twinkle Twinkies. In the end he feels horrible for what he did and apologizes. Garlic forgives him and everyone celebrates with some of Salty’s prize-winning Poppie Woppies.

### “A Creepy Conflict”

Written by SaCora F. and Kylie S. in 6<sup>th</sup> grade

Drew the Dragonfly, Sally the Spider, and Billy the Beetle are in a band called the Creepy Things. When their guitar player moves away they need to find a new one fast. They hold auditions and the best guitarist by far is Gloria the Grasshopper, however she is shy and unpopular. After a failed attempt at a makeover, the band members finally decide that Gloria is what she is, a great guitarist and that is what they need. They accept Gloria into the band as she is and they end up winning the Big Bug-a-loo Battle of the Bands and make a great new friend at the same time.

### “The Video Game”

Written by Andrew P. in 6<sup>th</sup> grade

Brady, Michael, and Andrew can’t wait to check out the new Wizard Mania video game, but when they find out that it is far too expensive for them to buy, Michael suggests they should steal the game. Brady and Andrew refuse and Michael realizes he should have

never even thought about stealing. In the end the boys work to earn the money to buy the game by helping their neighbors and are glad that they did the right thing.

### “The Cheater”

Written by Sydney P. in 4th grade

Joe, Ashley, and Lucas are monkeys in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. When Joe forgets to study for a test he worries that he might fail and miss Lucas’s party. Ashley and Lucas convince him to cheat by writing the answers on this arm. After Mrs. Jumpy passes out the test Joe starts feeling so bad about what he is about to do that he imagines a giant singing banana that reminds him that cheating is wrong. Joe ends up confessing to Mrs. Jumpy and all three monkeys get a punishment, but they have learned an important lesson.

## POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

Now that students have seen a live theatrical performance, take the opportunity to expand upon the experience and increase their understanding of what theatre is and why it is important. Use the following activities to stimulate class discussions and exercises. Appropriate grade levels are suggested, but feel free to adapt the activities to fit students’ needs. The important thing is to have fun and be creative.

### HAVE YOU GOT THE RIGHT STUFF?

K-6

Discuss The Right Stuff with students asking them to recount what the problem in each story was and how it was eventually resolved. Which characters did the right thing? Were there characters that chose to do the wrong thing?

Ask students if they have ever been faced with similar problems in their own lives. What choices did they make?

Have students come up with different situations where they would be faced with a difficult choice. Have them come up with a list of different choices they could make, good and bad. Have the class vote on what they think would be the right thing to do. Examples: You find a wallet with money and a credit card in it. Your friend asks to cheat off your test. You accidentally knock a vase off the shelf in a store and break it.

### WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER?

K-6

See how many details students remember by asking these theatrical trivia questions.

Costumes – the clothing worn by actors in a play.

Q: Each actor wore a different colored shirt. What were the five different colors?

A: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, and Purple

Set – the scenery and furniture used during a play to help show where the action of the play is taking place.

Q: The actors used boxes with red tops to sit and stand on to represent different things. How many of these boxes were there?

A: Two

Props – anything an actor holds in their hand during a play that helps establish their character or helps tell the story.

Q: The actors each had a prop in their hands when they were pretending to be bugs in the band. What did each of them have as their prop?

A: Drew the Dragonfly: Drumsticks  
Sally the Spider: Microphone  
Billy the Beetle: Bass Guitar  
Gloria the Grasshopper: Lead Guitar

Now ask students to come up with their own trivia questions to share with the class.

## WRITE A STORY, POEM, OR SONG

K-6

Ask students to write their own story, poem, or song that solves a problem or teaches a lesson. Remind students that a good story has a beginning, middle, and end, and a problem or conflict that gets resolved. Encourage them to create imaginative characters and settings. What is the moral or lesson that is learned? How do the characters change?

K-3

Take some of the stories that students have written and turn them into a play. With the teacher serving as the leader, cast students (or take volunteers) to play the various parts. Work together as a group to stage the play. Be creative. You may choose to add dialogue, songs, dances, characters, anything that helps tell the story. You may want to show off your play to parents or other classes.

4-6

Take some of the stories that students have written and turn them into a play. Divide the class into small groups of about five or six students. Each group (or the teacher) chooses one student per group to serve as the group leader. Have each group pick a story. The group leader assigns the roles in the story and the group works together to stage the play. Be creative. The group may choose to add dialogue, songs, dances, characters, anything that helps tell the story. Each group can perform their story for the other groups. You may want to show off your plays to parents or other classes.

## EXPRESS YOUR THOUGHTS

K-3

Ask students to write or draw pictures about the things that they saw and experienced during the play. Encourage them to talk about what they learned, what they liked, what they disliked, etc. They can even send pictures and letters to The Old Creamery Theatre Company at 39 38<sup>th</sup> Ave, Amana, IA 52203.

4-6

Ask students to write a review of the play. Encourage them to talk about what they learned, what they liked, what they disliked, how the play made them feel, and what it made them think about. Beyond just retelling the plots and themes of the stories, encourage them to discuss other elements of the production like costumes, set, props, sound effects, etc. They can even send their reviews to The Old Creamery Theatre Company at 39 38<sup>th</sup> Ave, Amana, IA 52203.